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Dr. Cane

The following memorandum has been approved by the Senate of Queen's University:—

Queen's University,  
Kingston.

December, 1916.

*Memo. re Six Year Course in Medicine.*

The Universities of Toronto and McGill have announced that, beginning in 1918, a six year academic course will be required to graduate in Medicine. This proposed action has been decided upon after conferences between these two Universities, but apparently without reference, in any way, to others equally interested in medical education in Canada.

There are seven other Canadian Universities engaged in teaching Medicine, and there are the various Provincial Medical Boards and the Medical Council of Canada, all interested in medical education. No opportunity has been afforded any of these to learn the reasons for the action of the two Universities, or to examine or discuss the proposals. The information before Queen's Medical Faculty has been received through letters of enquiry to the Deans of the Medical Faculties of Toronto and McGill Universities. So far as can be learned two reasons are advanced for the change. First, that more time is required for the preliminary sciences which lead to the study of Medicine, and second, that the change will bring the Medical Course for these Universities in agreement with that recently adopted by the best Universities in the United States. Careful examination of these two statements should be made before accepting the first as correct, or the second as proper and desirable. The Medical Faculty of Queen's University is not convinced of either.

In detail the proposals are as follows:—

"1. That a pre-medical year be added to the five years' course.

"2. That this pre-medical year be taken after matriculation is completed and be devoted to Physics, Chemistry, Biology and one literary subject (French or German).

"3. That the course of instruction shall include:

Physics, 3 lectures and 6 hrs. laboratory work per week.

Chemistry, 3 lectures and 6 hrs. laboratory work per week.

Biology, 3 lectures and 6 hrs. laboratory work per week.

Literary subject (French or German), 4 lectures.

Making a total of 13 lectures and 6 laboratory periods of three hours per week.

"4. That the above course may be taken at any College, University or Collegiate Institute, whose equipment and Staff meet with the approval of Toronto and McGill Universities."

At the present time preliminary education for the medical profession, so far as it is carried on in secondary schools and colleges in Canada, does not differ from that required for other professions. Junior Matriculation for the Universities is the minimum matriculation for entering Medicine. It is now proposed that after this has been completed a "pre-medical year" be devoted to Chemistry, Physics, Biology and French or German. This cannot be done to advantage at any high school, collegiate institute or secondary school in Canada. None of these has the staff and equipment that will warrant 18 hours laboratory work per week. Naturally the work indicated will not be the same as that for Senior Matriculation. It will, therefore, become necessary to take the work in the Universities. Now the work is not the same as first year work in Arts, so special classes must be formed to comply with the requirements. This will mean that Medical Faculties will have to make arrangements to supply the "pre-medical year." If the intention is to raise the standard of matriculation for Medicine, why not do so in a manner that would harmonize with the present work of the secondary schools? That would mean a minimum standard of senior matriculation in place of junior matriculation. The proposals as they stand do not appear to be practical or applicable to present conditions.

It is further proposed:—

"5. That the degree of B.Sc. in medical sciences be given at the end of the second year of the regular Medical Course to those students who, in addition to the regular work of the First and Second Years of the Medical Course, have done special work in one of the subjects of Anatomy, Physiology, or Biological Chemistry, the B.Sc. requirements to be so graded that about 50% of the candidates may obtain it."

From the point of view of the Medical Faculty of Queen's University, this is a most objectionable proposal. The B.Sc. in Queen's now requires honor matriculation in Mathematics, followed by four years' work. To award this degree in the medical sciences for a "pre-medical year" and two years of University work, would be a complete reversal of the policy the Universities have been pursuing of late years and could not but be regarded as a retrograde step by the Faculty and the Senate. If adopted, this new course would almost certainly displace the B.A., M.D. course of seven years, which is now taken by about 20% of the medical students in Queen's University. The seven year combined course is regarded here as a most satisfactory course for both general and medical education and its disappearance or displacement must be considered a grave objection to the new scheme.

There are a number of general objections to the proposal:

1. To spend six years with one Faculty in any University appears to be too long.

2. Six years' academic work to acquire the M.D. degree will tend to force graduates into practice at once without serving as hospital internes. Five years' academic work and a year as a hospital interne are certainly preferable to six years' academic work without the hospital experience as a preparation for practice.

3. The addition of a year to the medical course is proposed at a time that is most inopportune. The five year course has not yet been fully worked out even in those colleges which first adopted it. The proposals come at a time when there is an unusual demand for the services of medical men and when the

Governments of Great Britain and Canada are asking that everything possible be done to hasten the graduation of medical students now in attendance at the schools in order that their services may become available for both military and civil needs. The great need for qualified medical men throughout the Empire will not cease the moment the war is over. At the present time the supply of young graduates is inadequate for the needs of Canada; yet the adoption generally of the six year course must have the effect of considerably reducing the supply.

4. Another objection to the proposed change is that it follows the course of development in medical education in the United States, rather than the methods of British Schools. There is nothing in the history of medical education in the United States or in its present condition that need be emulated on this side of the line. So far we have followed our own methods and our own ideals and the results have been generally satisfactory to the profession and to the public. It would be most unfortunate now to depart from our own traditions to seek after the illusory paper standards of "Class A. Plus."

5. Further objection to the action of Toronto and McGill Universities is that it has been taken at a time when the matter of medical education is under investigation and review. A Royal Commissioner, appointed by the Ontario Government, is preparing a report which is likely to be comprehensive, and to influence professional and public opinion. The Canada Medical Council is reviewing all matters relating to standards of medical education and examination. An important report has just been issued on the subject of matriculation. Others will be prepared on the subjects of the curriculum and examinations, and time and opportunity should be taken for the study of these.

6. Exception must also be taken to the action of Toronto and McGill Universities without reference to the general body of medical opinion throughout Canada. No attempt has been made towards concerted action by the Universities and Medical Boards. The two largest Universities may ignore all

others, as well as all the licensing boards of the country, in a matter of the first and equal importance to all, but the length of the medical course is not a purely academic question. If the largest universities are to be also the leading universities, there are certain obligations resting upon them, not only in their relations to others engaged in similar work, but to the public as well. The question may well be asked, is public opinion ready to endorse the addition of a year in preparation for admission to the medical profession?

7. Consideration of this important matter is not complete without full details of the financial aspect of it. This is a side upon which the public will properly ask for information. Is the course in Medicine to become so expensive that only those with considerable resources can hope to enter it? At the present time the expense is almost prohibitive for the average working man's son. If another year is added it will be entirely so. A physician graduating in 1891 from Trinity Medical School, in Toronto, gives his total expense, for four years, as \$1,240. Another who graduated at Queen's in 1894 spent \$1,321 in all. These amounts included college and graduation fees and everything else, books, board, lodging and travelling expenses. From these figures it is evident that 20 years ago a working man, a farmer, or any other man with a modest income, might safely encourage his son to study medicine, confident that with the summer work of the boy to help, the expense could be met. It was also quite possible for an active young man to provide himself with funds sufficient to pay his way. Now the number of self-supporting students has greatly diminished. Some figures have been secured from members of a recent class, graduating after four years at Queen's. Four students, two self-supporting and two not, who kept accurate records, supplied figures from which it has been determined that the average minimum cost of four years at Queen's has risen in recent years to \$2,045. To this must now be added the expense of the fifth year, making at least \$2,500. If a sixth year is to be required it will increase the minimum expense to \$3,000. At Toronto and McGill the college fees and living

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expenses are considerably higher and it is estimated that the present five year course cannot be done for less than \$3,000. These are startling figures. They mean that the medical profession is no longer open to the class of young men to which reference has been made. There is another aspect of some interest. Twenty-five years ago the medical student paid for his education. All the schools were proprietary schools and none received aid from the Government of the Province. Now all are receiving annual grants from the Provincial Government, so that every taxpayer in the Province of Ontario contributes to the cost of medical education. Will the public and the Government calmly acquiesce in this proposed increase in time and money necessary to gain an entrance to the profession of Medicine?

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